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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [UNGA](#) [KUNR](#) [IN](#) [BR](#) [IT](#) [JP](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: UNSC REFORM: OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP MEETS; PGA
IMPLIES NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER

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[1](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 960
[1](#)C. USUN NEW YORK 927
[1](#)D. USUN NEW YORK 840

Classified By: Ambassador Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) during the 63rd UNGA session, the President of the General Assembly (PGA) reiterated his October 10 letter to the membership about launching intergovernmental negotiations November 21, though he had previously indicated to a number of delegations that he planned to postpone the launch until February, per the "spirit" of GA decision 62/557. The PGA openly criticized the Uniting for Consensus bloc for pressuring him to respect a gentleman's agreement on a February launch he claimed not to know. As a result, the meeting was polarized between the Group of Four supporting the PGA's decision to accelerate the negotiations timetable and the Uniting for Consensus bloc's defense against the PGA's criticism. Due to scheduling constraints, the afternoon session was postponed until November 17 when we hope the PGA will clarify his intentions regarding the launch of intergovernmental negotiations. END SUMMARY.

PGA's opening remarks
polarize subsequent debate

[1](#)2. (SBU) The President of the General Assembly (PGA) Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, speaking at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) during the 63rd UNGA session on November 11, emphasized his number one priority, democratization of the United Nations, and said "every country counts." He referenced Nobel Prize-winning Economist Joe Stiglitz's remarks two weeks earlier at the PGA's Global Financial Crisis Interactive Panel when Stiglitz said, "We are now at another Bretton Woods moment." The PGA described the Security Council as largely unchanged from the post-World War II period and called for "adapting yesterday's multilateral institutions to today's multipolar world."

[1](#)3. (SBU) While the PGA noted the membership's consensus decision in General Assembly decision 62/557 to launch intergovernmental negotiations before February 28, 2009, and that the OEWG was meeting, per the decision, to begin discussions on framework and modalities to prepare and facilitate those negotiations (ref D), he also reiterated his

October 10 letter to the membership (ref C) that he would convene an informal plenary of the General Assembly on November 21, 2008 to commence intergovernmental negotiations.

He then said, "However, I have been under an undue amount of pressure from the United (sic) for Consensus Group that has accused me of not respecting a gentleman's agreement reached on the evening of September 15 to the effect that the intergovernmental negotiations in the informal plenary could not start until the OEWG finished its work (February 1, 2009). Although I was not a party to any such agreement and had no way of knowing about it, if it really existed, I want to be as reasonable and flexible as possible without, at the same time, allowing a very small minority to impose its will on the majority."

¶4. (SBU) Before ending his opening remarks, the PGA highlighted the upcoming November 18 plenary debate on Security Council reform and the report of the Open-ended Working Group from the last session and drew particular attention to the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. He then noted his appointment of Afghan Perm Rep Zahir Tanin as a Vice Chair of the OEWG.

¶5. (SBU) The PGA's specific reference to the Uniting for Consensus (UFC)'s lobbying efforts to have him return to the original timetable anticipated in the September 15, 2008 compromise effectively polarized the rest of the session. Group of Four (G-4) supporters echoed the PGA's comments, and UFC members denied exerting pressure. Of the 23 speakers, at least fourteen supported launching intergovernmental negotiations in February 2009.

¶6. (C) Comment: The PGA's explanation for his statement was that he was furious with Italian Perm Rep Terzi for revealing the contents of the deal they struck to cancel the November 21 session. Terzi wrote the PGA October 31 to summarize their agreement and then disseminated that letter to the membership November 6, after meeting with Afghan Perm Rep Tanin who referred to plans to still hold the November 21 meeting. While Terzi's clumsy tactics subjected his entire bloc to the PGA's criticism during the OEWG meeting, the PGA did not "rise above" the machinations of the various blocs and "bridge the divide." Instead, the optics were that he supported the G-4 camp, much to the delight of the German and Indian delegations. End comment.

U.S. remarks

¶7. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo, speaking ninth, made the U.S. intervention (drawn from ref A) focusing on the need for all member states to concentrate on the work in the OEWG to prepare the path forward for intergovernmental negotiations in February. Ambassador DiCarlo noted this period would allow delegations to prepare themselves fully for the start of negotiations and that there was no reason to rush the process. She also reminded member states that reform of the Council must be undertaken as part of an effort whose ultimate purpose should be increasing the effectiveness of the entire UN system -- including reforms in other areas such as GA financing and decision-making.

Other P-5 remarks

¶8. (SBU) Three other members of the P-5 spoke November 11. The French DPR, as a G-4 supporter, stressed that the September 15 decision could not be reversed; that the necessary parameters are known; and that the OEWG's work cannot be a pre-condition for the start of intergovernmental negotiations. The Russian DPR argued in favor of continued discussions in the OEWG because if intergovernmental negotiations start now, current disagreements among the membership will not disappear and will lead to a rapid stalemate of the negotiations. He stressed that time is needed to develop mutually acceptable bases and called on the Chair to act as an impartial broker between member states.

He noted that Security Council reform is "first and foremost a political question" and that there is a "need to remove the dividing lines, not deepen the existing lines." He said Russia is ready to consider any reasonable approach, even a transitional approach. The UK Perm Rep, another supporter of the G-4, stressed the importance for the Security Council to reflect the realities of the 21st century; urged that there be an open and transparent process, given the real chance for progress; and agreed that the OEWG should focus on modalities and framework but said that the start of intergovernmental negotiations do not depend upon such an agreement. (Note: China will speak on November 17. November 11's afternoon session was postponed because both the PGA and Ambassador Tanin were unable to chair the meeting due to the PGA's preparations for the November 12-13 plenary session on agenda item 45 (Culture of Peace) and Tanin's attendance at President Karzai's arrival for that plenary. That afternoon session, with 17 speakers currently on the list, has been rescheduled for Monday, November 17 at 3 pm. End note.)

The UFC

¶9. (SBU) The Mexican Perm Rep, a UFC member, spoke first and stressed Mexico's commitment to Security Council reform and to GA decision 62/557, saying that to ignore the decision would lead to paralysis. He proposed a draft schedule of work for five meetings of the OEWG before negotiations would start in February. Two meetings would focus on the purposes and principles of the negotiations and three meetings on the terms of reference for the actual negotiations. Then a final meeting would assist the Chair in preparing the report of the OEWG to the informal plenary, due no later than February 1. The Italian Perm Rep, in his own remarks later in the session, referred specifically to the PGA's own words that "every country counts" and stressed that was why there needed

to first be a discussion in the OEWG on modalities and framework before the launch of negotiations. He referred to the PGA's emphasis in his June acceptance speech on the "United" in "United Nations" and the need to respect the sovereign equality of all members. He also noted that the UFC represents almost 45 percent of the world's population, thereby politely countering the PGA's assertion that the UFC is a "very small minority."

¶10. (SBU) The Costa Rican Perm Rep gave the strongest speech in support of the UFC position that Mission officers have heard in a long time. He specifically cited the increased level of confrontation amongst the membership as a result of the "ambition of a handful of states - that you can count on one hand - that wish at any cost to become permanent members of the Security Council." He then referred to the small states who "revolve" around those handful of large states and questioned the "ephemeral advantage" they would achieve if those large states achieved permanent membership. Speaking as a current member of the Security Council, he said that, while Costa Rica supports Council reform, it is opposed to the presence of more permanent members on the Council since it does not believe the Council would be more efficient as a result. In fact, he said, "More permanent members on the Council mean that the maxim 'might is right' would be further confirmed." He noted that if reform of the Council is to reflect 21st century realities then we must question why there are two permanent members and two non-permanent members from the WEOG on the Council when the EU is moving towards a common foreign policy. Or, why certain permanent members contribute less than half of what certain non-permanent members contribute. He then said that the OEWG should acknowledge that Security Council methods have been reformed, specifically citing Belgium's Open Debate in the Council in August on the subject.

The G-4

¶11. (SBU) The German Perm Rep spoke first from the G-4 and

stressed his belief that "delegations here know what happened in September" and that Germany is 100 percent behind the PGA.

He said that there is no real gain to be achieved from the OEWG and the focus should be on the informal plenary and intergovernmental negotiations. He said that format and modalities have already been determined by GA decision 62/557 and the rules of procedure of the GA. The Japanese Perm Rep welcomed the PGA's initiative to organize an informal plenary and commence negotiations on November 21 but said that Japan is prepared to participate constructively and demonstrate flexibility in the process of negotiations and looks to the PGA for his continuous guidance in leading the negotiations.

¶12. (SBU) The Brazilian Perm Rep argued against extensive discussions in the OEWG and suggested that after a first round of substantive negotiations in the informal plenary on November 21, the Chair should draft an options paper over the holiday period to which the member states could then react in the next meeting of the informal plenary in 2009. The Indian Perm Rep said there was no "gentleman's agreement" or sequence to GA decision 62/557 and, ignoring the existence of paragraph (c) in GA decision 62/557, said that the only role for the OEWG comes after intergovernmental negotiations begin and only if an issue needs to be referred to the OEWG. He termed the OEWG "singularly ineffective" and said that after 15 years no one can accuse them of rushing the process. (Note: The Argentine Perm Rep, a UFC member countered the Indian Perm Rep in his remarks, saying that waiting 75 days to start negotiations is very reasonable. End note.)

Other delegations

¶13. (SBU) Mauritius, usually a stalwart supporter of India on Security Council reform, spoke on behalf of the African Group and argued for the Ezulwini Consensus: not less than two permanent seats for Africa on the Council with a veto and not less than five non-permanent seats, and that African states should be responsible for selecting those African members of the Council. He said, "Africa is running late to take its rightful place on the Security Council." While the

Egyptian Perm Rep did associate himself with the Mauritian Perm Rep's remarks, he also stressed the sequence of the "spirit" of Decision 62/557. He noted that it made sense for negotiations to not commence until after the Chair's report on the work of the OEWG to the informal plenary. The Portuguese Perm Rep, who was a Vice Chair during the last session and generally regarded as a G-4 supporter, also reminded the Working Group of the September 15 compromise and said, "Without the sequential package, we would not have reached a compromise."

Comment

¶14. (C) We plan to approach the PGA to seek a clarification of his intentions for November 21. He did not clarify the situation in his opening remarks November 11 and left the membership confused about his ultimate intentions and questioning his ability to be a force to rally together the membership. Ambassador Tanin privately told Ambassador DiCarlo November 13 that the PGA will not hold the November 21 meeting and that Tanin is recommending a series of OEWG meetings before launching intergovernmental negotiations in January or February. End comment.
Khalilzad